

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The invention presents an optical element with which an optical head can be configured, in which there is little deterioration of the correctional effect when the objective lens shifts, as well as an optical head and an optical recording/reproducing apparatus using such an optical element. The invention also presents a novel optical recording/reproducing apparatus and optical recording/reproducing method. The optical element, includes a first voltage application electrode 13, a first opposing electrode 17 arranged in opposition to the first voltage application electrode 13, and a first phase changing layer 15 arranged between the first voltage application electrode 13 and the first opposing electrode 17. By changing a voltage between the first voltage application electrode 13 and the first opposing electrode 17, a phase that converts plane waves into spherical waves is imparted on light that is incident on the first phase changing layer 15.

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